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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 HELSINKI 001407

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/ERA, EUR/NB, AND EUR/RPM

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [XF](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [RS](#) [SU](#) [FI](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: FINLAND AND THE NOVEMBER 2 GAERC MEETING

REF: A. STATE 228399

[B](#). STATE 230353

[C](#). VOLKER/POL CHIEFS E-MAIL OF OCTOBER 26

[D](#). HELSINKI 1221

Classified By: POL Chief John Hall, for reasons 1.4(B) and (D)

[1](#). (C) We delivered the demarche points from Ref A-C messages to Leena Alto, deputy European Correspondent in the Finnish MFA, and to Jonna Partanen, Counselor in the Secretariat for EU Affairs in the office of PM Vanhanen. Alto and Partanen briefed us on the positions FM Tuomioja will be taking to the GAERC meeting, as follows.

Iraq

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[2](#). (U) Alto said the GoF agrees that the January elections are extremely important -- as is the political process that precedes them. The Iraqi people deserve free and fair elections, and Finland has contributed to the International Reconstruction Fund Facility to help make that a reality. Alto added that Finland offers its firm support -- both nationally and through the EU -- to PM Allawi in the IIG's efforts to establish the institutions of civil society in Iraq.

[3](#). (C) Insofar as assistance to the Iraqi police is concerned, Finland (as Washington is aware) already contributes ten instructors to the academy in Jordan. Alto said the GoF is willing to consider a joint EU project -- but anything the EU does in Iraq "must be carefully considered in light of the serious security situation that now exists."

Sudan

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[4](#). (C) Alto said, "We are on the same wavelength, very much so." The GoF welcomes the resumption of the Abuja talks, and agrees the international community should keep up the pressure on both sides to reach an agreement. At the same time, efforts must continue to find a solution to the humanitarian crisis on the ground. The Finns "recognize the African ownership of the process," she said, and support AU efforts in Darfur. Alto nevertheless noted there has been some talk of an EU police mission. The GoF feels there needs to be more clarity regarding the modalities of such a mission. If that needed clarity is supplied, she said, "we would consider positively" the idea of participating in a "well-planned police mission" in Darfur.

Russia

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[5](#). (C) Alto noted that the agenda for the upcoming EU-Russia Summit includes further negotiation on the four common spaces. It seems unlikely to the Finns that all four can be completed at the Summit. Finland strongly believes that nothing should be agreed until everything is agreed, even if that means that the four spaces all must be held over for further negotiation later. Alto said the Finns will resist any suggestion that Russia and the European Union agree what they can now and defer the rest for later: doing so would allow the Russians to "pick and choose what they want" from the document.

[6](#). (C) She reiterated a complaint we have heard from the Finns before (e.g., Ref D): that the EU has no real unity regarding relations with Russia. When the going gets tough, a few individual members break away to pursue their own bilateral relationships with Russia for their own national reasons. At every EU meeting Finland (which still has the Union's longest border with Russia) stresses the need for unity on this matter. "The EU is the main vehicle for conduct of relations with Russia," said Alto, "and we want to keep it that way."

Iran

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[7](#). (C) Alto said the Finns fully agree on the importance of the November 25-26 IAEA Board of Governors meeting. They support unified U.S./EU pressure on the Iranians to suspend

all enrichment-related activity.

Middle East Peace Process

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18. (C) The GoF welcomes PM Sharon's plan for withdrawal from Gaza, said Alto. She added that the Finns consider the planned Palestinian elections a necessary test case for PA willingness to engage in democratic reforms. Finland understands it is likely the EU will offer its help in organizing the elections, and the GoF supports such an offer.

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